

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BERLIN 05876 191918Z

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SUBJECT: LEIPZIG 1976 SPRING FAIR

REF: (A) STATE 135186; (B) BERLIN 5853; (C) BERLIN 5684

SUMMARY. GDR OFFICIALS HAVE REACTED IN A LOW-KEY AND UNDERSTANDING MANNER TO OUR CANCELLATION OF PLANS FOR A BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICE AT THE LEIPZIG 1975 FALL FAIR. THIS MILD REACTION IS IN PART DUE TO SATISFACTION WITH OUR PLANS FOR AN EXHIBIT AT THE SPRING 1976 FAIR. AIR REGULATIONS PRECLUDE THIS EXHIBIT FROM CONSTITUTING AN "OFFICIAL" USG PRESENCE, BUT THIS LIMITATION SHOULD NOT MATERIALLY VITIATE THE EXHIBIT'S EFFECTIVENESS AS A TRADE PROMOTION VEHICLE, END SUMMARY

1. DURING A TWO-HOUR CONVERSATION ON JUNE 16 IN LEIPZIG WITH FAIR AUTHORITY (LFA) DIRECTORS HAACK AND MEHNERT, EMBASSY OFFICER (A) ANNOUNCED OUR CANCELLATION OF PLANS FOR A LEIPZIG 1975 FALL FAIR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICE (REF B) AND (B) STATED OUR INTENTION TO MOUNT A 20-
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PAGE 02 BERLIN 05876 191918Z

BOOTH, 500 SQUARE METER SHOW AT THE LEIPZIG

1976 SPRING FAIR (REF A). THE EAST GERMAN REACTION TO THE FORMER NEWS WAS A MIXTURE OF MILD DISAPPOINTMENT AND RELIEF; DISAPPOINTMENT THAT WE COULD NOT BE PARTICIPATING (ALTHOUGH THEY SAID THAT NO PRESENCE WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO AN INADEQUATE ONE) AND RELIEF IN THAT IT FREED OUR RESERVED SPACE FOR AN AUSTRIAN FIRM. DURING SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS IN BERLIN ON JUNE 18 BOTH SCHMIED OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE AND DOELLING OF THE CHAMBER OF FOREIGN TRADE MADE UNDERSTANDING MOISES WHEN THEY WERE INFORMED OF OUR DECISION. IN LEIPZIG MEHNERT AGAIN RAISED THE QUESTION OF "OFFICIAL" VERSUS "COMMERCIAL" PARTICIPATION IN CONNECTION WITH OUR PLANS FOR THE MARCH 14-21, 1976 FAIR (REF C).

2. ACCORDING TO MEHNERT, AN "OFFICIAL" GOVERNMENT PRESENCE MAY BE SITUATED ONLY IN HALL 16, THE SITE OF OUR MARCH 1975 LEIPZIG BDO. WHILE COMMERCE CAN ORGANIZE A JOINT AMERICAN EXHIBIT ALONG VERTICAL LINES WITH A VENUE IN ANOTHER FAIR HALL, SUCH A PRESENCE COULD NOT BE ACCORDED "OFFICIAL" STATUS, NOR COULD IT FUNCTION AS A USG PRESENCE AT THE FAIR. MEHNERT INDICATED THAT THERE IS NO FLEXIBILITY IN THIS GDR POSITION, SINCE IT IS BASED ON A LONG-STANDING LFA RULE TO WHICH ALL FOREIGN EXHIBITORS HAVE HAD TO ADHERE. MEHNERT URGED, THEREFORE, THAT WE CONSIDER ERECTING A MODEST "OFFICIAL" STAND IN HALL 16 SIMILAR TO THOSE MAINTAINED THERE BY THE BRITISH, FRENCH, ITALIANS AND AUSTRIANS. HE NOTED THAT SUCH STANDS SERVE NATIONALS OF THESE COUNTRIES AS BASES OF OPERATION AND CONTACT PLACES. THEIR UTILITY IS ENHANCED BY THE IDENTICAL LOCATIONS OF THESE STANDS DURING SUCCESSIVE FAIRS. MEHNERT OBSERVED THAT SUCH A PERMANENT LOCATION COULD ALSO BENEFIT THE US, SINCE FUTURE COMMERCE SHOWS WOULD PROBABLY BE LOCATED IN OTHER FAIR HALLS, DEPENDING ON THE PRODUCT CATEGORY BEING HIGHLIGHTED.

3. IN RESPONSE, EMBASSY OFFICER NOTED HIS PERSONAL BELIEF THAT THE DISTINCTION DRAWN BY THE LFA BETWEEN UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BERLIN 05876 191918Z

"OFFICIAL" AND "COMMERCIAL" PARTICIPATION IS ARBITRARY AND WITHOUT RELEVANCE FOR USG PLANS AND OBJECTIVES. HE OBSERVED THAT WE ARE MORE INTERESTED IN THE SUBSTANCE OF THE EXHIBIT, I.E., THE PROMOTION OF TRADE, THAN WE ARE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SEPARATE PRO FORMA "OFFICIAL" PRESENCE TO SATISFY A REQUIREMENT OF THE LFA. HE POINTED OUT THAT AN EXHIBIT BEARING AN INSCRIPTION ALONG THE LINES "...A JOINT EXHIBIT

ORGANIZED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE" WOULD, IPSO FACTO, CONSTITUTE A "QUASI-OFFICIAL" USG PRESENCE WHETHER LOCATED IN HALL 16 OR ELSEWHERE ON THE FAIR GROUNDS. IN CONCLUSION, EMBASSY OFFICER OPINED THAT THE TEST FOR WHETHER AN EXHIBIT SHOULD BE SITUATED IN HALL DEVOTED TO A PARTICULAR CATEGORY OF INDUSTRIAL GOODS OR IN A HALL DEVOTED TO REPRESENTATIONAL DISPLAYS SHOULD DEPEND UPON THE NATURE OF THE EXHIBIT RATHER THAN THE CHARACTER OF THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATION. EMBASSY OFFICER'S ARGUMENTS APPARENTLY FELL ON DEAF EARS. MEHNERT CONCLUDED THIS PART OF THE CONVERSATION BY EMPHATICALLY REPEATING THE LFA POSITION.

4. COMMENT. OUR VIEW IS THAT AN "OFFICIAL" PRESENCE AT THE LEIPZIG FAIR ALONG THE LINES MAINTAINED BY SEVERAL WESTERN COUNTRIES--ESSENTIALLY OFFICES AND RECEPTION AREAS--IS NOT NOW WARRANTED. (THIS VIEW DOES NOT PRECLUDE THE ERECTION AT AN APPROPRIATE JUNCTURE OF A SUITABLE IMAGE SHOW IN HALL 16 TO COMPLEMENT A COMMERCIAL EXHIBIT ELSEWHERE ON THE FAIR GROUNDS OR, FOR THAT MATTER, IN LIEU OF SUCH AN EXHIBIT.) AT SOME FUTURE POINT, HOWEVER, WE MAY WISH TO EMULATE THE "OFFICIAL" BRITISH STAND: A RELATIVELY ELABORATE (COMPARED TO ITS AUSTRIAN, ITALIAN AND FRENCH RIVALS) ENCLOSURE THAT CONTAINS A LARGE LOUNGE AS WELL AS OFFICE SPACE FOR THE ENTIRE HM EMBASSY BERLIN COMMERCIAL STAFF OF SIX INDIVIDUALS. IN THE MEANTIME, SPECIAL CARE WILL HAVE TO BE EXERCISED IN ADHERING TO THE LETTER, IF NOT TO THE SPIRIT, OF THE LFA'S REGULATIONS. TO IGNORE THESE COULD CREATE PROBLEMS WITH BOTH THE LFA AND WITH OTHER NATIONAL EXHIBITORS.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 BERLIN 05876 191918Z

5. THE PRACTICAL CONSTRAINTS WITHIN WHICH WE WILL HAVE TO OPERATE SHOULD NOT PROVE UNDULY ONEROUS. OUR NATIONAL COLORS MAY BE EMPLOYED IN DECORATING THE EXHIBIT, BUT OUR FLAG CANNOT BE EXHIBITED. SIMILARLY, A PORTRAIT OF A USG PERSONALITY AND A MESSAGE MAY NOT BE DISPLAYED AS WAS DONE AT THE SPRING 1975 FAIR. MOREOVER, COMMERCE, USIA AND EMBASSY VISIBILITY WILL HAVE TO BE KEPT APPROPRIATELY LOW. WHILE EMBASSY AND EXHIBIT PERSONNEL WILL BE ABLE TO USE THE EXHIBIT LOUNGE AND HAVE OFFICES ON EXHIBIT PREMISES, A LISTING OF SUCH OFFICES IN THE FAIR CATALOGUE AND TELEPHONE DIRECTORY, FOR EXAMPLE, WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE. COOPER

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